

For Those
Concerned With
Children 2-12
*To Stimulate Thinking
Rather Than Advocate
Fixed Practices*

1957-1958
That We May Explore
Resources for Learning

Childhood Education

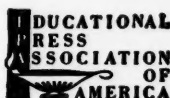
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Subscription \$4.50. ACEI membership (including subscription) \$7. Comprehensive membership \$9. Single copies 75 cents. Send orders to 1200 Fifteenth Street, N. W., Washington 5, D. C. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the act of March 3, 1897. Copyright 1958. Association for Childhood Education International, Washington 5, D. C.

Published monthly September through May by

ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDHOOD EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL

1200 15th ST., N. W., WASHINGTON 5, D. C.



A parent visits school.

*Courtesy, Earl Dible,
Santa Monica Unified School District, Calif.*

Parents Are Individuals

WE KNOW THAT EFFECTIVE EDUCATION INFLUENCES THINKING, ACTIONS and behavior. Since education takes place in the home as well as in the school, the importance of teamwork between teachers and parents cannot be overemphasized.

How can we in the schools utilize parents to the fullest as resource people not only to enhance learning opportunities at school but also to provide an effective environment for learning at home? Our answer comes from our experience in the classroom. Good teachers have long recognized that each child must be taught in terms of his particular needs. Isn't it reasonable to assume that we might well work with parents in terms of their individual differences in backgrounds, interests and sensitivities? Here are some suggestions:

We need to be clear in our attitude toward parents and realize that they have unique contributions to make as people. We need to sense that all parents are interesting people to know.

We need to know parents well. This demands a plan for regular individual conferences plus an "open door" policy in which we capitalize on many informal opportunities for communication.

We must wholeheartedly share with parents our educational goals for their children and plans by which we are trying to attain these goals. Much of this must be in terms of each child with his parents.

We must suggest to parents specific ways in which the home can assist the child in his learning activities, such as the following: providing an atmosphere for study, making appropriate reading material available, taking a child on a trip to further his understanding of a subject being studied at school, helping him prepare a report or exhibit growing out of his interests and experiences at home. Suggestions must be tailor made in relation to the needs of each child.

We must be good listeners, thereby inviting parents to share their concerns about their children with us.

As we work with parents, we will be learning to know them so well that we will discover ways in which they can enrich the classroom experiences of children. Parents will learn to know us so well that they will not hesitate to suggest ways in which they can help. The parent who is a watchmaker may be invaluable for a science experience; the parent who has just returned from a trip in another part of the country can enrich a social studies unit immeasurably; the father who publishes a newspaper can make an instructional trip especially valuable; the parents who have just moved here from a European country can bring to life some of the concepts concerning world understanding which teachers are trying to develop.

Parents who are teammates with their child's teacher in creating a good total environment for learning are in a very fine position to decide the kind of schools which America needs. As individuals, they will not only be more ready to support and even demand good education, but they will also be able to interpret the needs of education to other citizens who do not have such intimate contact with the schools.—
ROBERT S. GILCHRIST, *superintendent of schools, University City, Mo.*

Using Science to Make Democracies Strong

Science is a power for maintaining strength and improving a democratic way of life. It is not alone for educating future scientists or for preparation for war.

THERE HAS GROWN UP A CONVICTION that the free nations must remain strong if they are to remain free. There is also a realization that there is power in science and therefore science is an essential element in maintaining strength and in improving the democratic way of life. To be truly strong, an entire nation must be made conversant with science. This task is uniquely suited to the elementary school—the institution of all the people. To realize this goal, science must be considered as fundamental in the all-around education of children in a democracy.

Resourcefulness Needed at All Times

The development of strength in a democracy must rest on a broader and more substantial basis than that of educating future scientists. Both in time of peace and in time of war, an intelligent and resourceful population is needed. For a nation to be free, it is not enough that scientists make discoveries in the laboratories. There are decisions to be made. The complex life of the community must go on. Industry and agriculture must maintain their momentum and find ways to improve their operation. Behavior in every walk of life should reflect courage, creativity and responsibility in dealing with the resources of the nation. No nation is any stronger than the combined wisdom of its people. If attention is given to the development of science in a way which is in keeping with the purposes of the elementary school (democ-

racy's basic institution) tomorrow's scientists will be integrated into a population conversant with the attitudes and content of science in a democracy.

Democracy can only benefit by having its future scientists and laymen in the same classroom in the elementary school. It is most important that children who are to be the future scientists come through the experiences in the elementary schools along with children who will pursue other vocations. It is important in a democracy that science be the product of the democracy and be used as a tool of its people. Science has great potentialities for both good and evil. Any tool as vital as science must be in the ultimate control of all the people.

Any design for elementary education that calls for the complete separation of children with exceptional abilities in science from other children is a step toward a totalitarian form of government. We must at all hazards avoid letting any group which has lost contact with the majority of the people gain control of our government.

Power in Hands of All People

People living in a democracy should realize that there is power in the knowledge of science and keep the control of that power in their own hands. This means that science is fundamental in the all-around education of boys and girls. They must become intelligent citizens in

order to make decisions necessary to manage a democracy that uses science as one of its tools.

Children with exceptional abilities in the field of science can be given opportunities for leadership and creative activities in the classroom and in the community without being separated from those who are less gifted along these lines. Some scientists have had an unnecessary degree of difficulty in communicating their ideas to people who are not specialists in their special fields. Children with special abilities in science can begin to learn to communicate their ideas and their learnings to fellow classmates through discussions and presentations, as well as through writing, art and dramatics in the classroom. Therefore, even if one should look at science education merely as a means of developing future scientists for a democracy, one would still have no justification for completely separating the future scientists from the rest of the children.

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Education for Uncertainty

Everyone knows that through science man has made discoveries about the nature of the universe which can be useful in developing a higher standard of living, better health, more conveniences, finer recreations; and yet many of these discoveries provide man with new means for human destruction. The boys and girls in the elementary school classrooms will live in a time of important decisions—decisions as to whether science is to be used predominantly for good or for evil. *It is essential to the very survival of our civilization that the next generation have the abilities to secure the potentialities of science for the welfare of all people. To do this they must learn how*

to utilize the most reliable information available in making decisions in vital matters.

Traditionally schools have been designed for an era of certainty, with a tendency toward fixed intellectual goals and a more or less absolute and authoritarian view of subject matter. But we do not know what the future will be for the children in our classrooms today. Furthermore, we are learning through science that what we know today may need revision tomorrow. Man's conception of truth changes. *Our children will need the ability to reconstruct their ideas throughout their lives.*

The preservation and advancement of democracy depend to no small extent on the behavior patterns developed in children. Since we do not know what the future will be, we need to educate children for uncertainty. This does not imply that we need be pessimistic about the problems these children will face in the future. Rather, we can be confident that if we assist them to develop democratic and resourceful behavior, they will make their own future—and make it a good one.

Developing Adequacy for Present and Future

We know we cannot guarantee children security for the future. It could even be an injustice to them if we were to encourage them to develop a feeling that our generation is building for them a completely secure future. We cannot know today what is the exact content they

Gerald S. Craig is professor emeritus of natural sciences, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. This article is adapted from the new edition of his book, "Science for the Elementary School Teacher" (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1958).

will need tomorrow, for we do not know for certain the nature of tomorrow's discoveries. We cannot know for a certainty the problems of tomorrow that our children will face.

The behavior patterns of "guaranteed security" given to children should be replaced by the behavior patterns of "adequacy to meet challenge." We need to assist children to become adequate to the problems of today and whatever they may face tomorrow. We need to help children learn how they can assist themselves by working together. The best security our children can have is in being adequate to the problems of tomorrow through democracy, intelligence and resourcefulness.

Dynamic Education for Preservation and Advancement of Democracy

Children need a positive and dynamic program. They need a program which develops a feeling of being needed by our democracy in a world which must continually strive for peace. Children are needed not alone to assume responsibility for their own nation but also to work toward a better world for all nations. There are many opportunities for children and teachers to work to improve conditions in the classroom, the school and the community.

Science in elementary education should be considered from a *developmental* point of view—a point of view that is sound both with regard to the fundamental nature of children and that of science. The fundamental characteristic common to both children and science is that both are actively involved in interpreting the objects and events of the environment. Science may be defined as man's attempt to explore, to interpret and

to operate with materials and forces of the universe that surround him. Modern science grew out of this age-old endeavor of the human race. The individual, whether child or adult, attempts from birth to death to orient himself to the forces of the environment.

This indicates that the historic function of science—that of exploring or interpreting the events of the environment—is in keeping with the dynamic drives of children. Teaching and learning in the field of science can be consistent with the nature of children.

Belongs to All

In a very real sense, then, we might say that the potentialities of science are inside human beings. To make it more personal, we may think of these potentialities as being in such human beings as ourselves—teachers and children in the classroom. Indeed, science itself has grown out of this tremendous urge—this wonderful potentiality—on the part of mankind through the long centuries to understand the universe.

It is most important to the success of our way of life that all children have a favorable attitude toward science. Science should not seem foreign or exotic to them. Science viewed as the age-old drive of man to adjust himself to his environment and to maintain his own equilibrium in the welter of biological and physical forces carries with it a larger point of view than a purely vocational one. Science is the result of man's experience and logical thinking through the centuries. Science, like democracy or the mother tongue, belongs to all who wish to make use of it. Children should be made to feel that science belongs to everyone.

Parents Know Their Children

Parents know their children from the home's vantage point. Teachers know these same children as they interact with many others and in varied situations at school. This information pooled will result in better education for their children, write Elizabeth and Dallas Beal, parents from Manhasset, Long Island, New York.

RECENTLY, OUR FIVE YEAR OLD ASKED a favor of his grandmother. After granting the favor, Grandma said to him, "Now what do you say, Jeff?" He replied willingly enough, "Thank you," but with a smirk on his face followed this with a low, but audible, additional remark, "Now that ought to shut your water off!" (This is, of course, the same boy who rarely fails to comment on a lovely colored sunset or a painting that strikes his fancy.)

You are perhaps asking, "What happened next?"

Were we to report the aftermath of this incident, the important purpose of our opening remarks would be contradicted. When the question is asked, "Do we know our children?" parents must look deeper than the context of what they read in much of the advice and information about child rearing which pricks at them from psychology books and from "advice to harried parents" columns in newspapers and magazines. Rather, we parents must see *our* children as *they* are and, in turn, see *ourselves* as *we* are.

That screaming, red-headed, scratched-up, head-way-out-of-shape piece of humanity we first viewed didn't fit any "norm" we had previously studied—except the "most beautiful baby in the world." The second event, a plump little girl, looking like a "picked quail," peaceful and bright eyed, didn't fit any

"norm" other than the "most beautiful baby—at least in the nursery." Looking at ourselves as parents, we are truly grateful that we are blessed with two healthy but very different children. However, the wonderful thing about parenthood is the discovery of how exciting it is to be unable to predict how our offspring will behave or what they will become. Wouldn't it be dull if suddenly a pediatrician could, after thoroughly examining our infant and finding him normal and healthy, successfully predict all the wonderful things parents are privileged to discover and help develop in a unique and individual way during their child's early years? To this extent we, as parents, have learned that we didn't bring into the world children who fit a preconceived "norm" and would venture to say that nothing magical happens when they enter the school door.

We might ask ourselves, "Isn't the norm established by equalizing the number of children on both sides?" If so, perhaps both parents and teachers should stop pushing Johnny "up" and Mary "down" and become better acquainted with them, enjoying the part of children which defies any attempt to be fitted into a theoretical groove.

What do parents know? "Daddy, why don't you and I be buddies and go upstairs and turn the lights on," said Jeff in a man-to-man way, trying not to admit his fear of going upstairs to a dark bed-

room. The earliest and continuous demonstrations of security and anxiety; the delicate imbalance that takes place over the years among physical, social, emotional and intellectual maturity; the varying responses to conforming measures that must necessarily be taught and learned—all these we witness as parents. We see certain patterns of growth and patterns of responses and very early we learn to tailor our teaching to the individuality so evident in each of our offspring. We willingly share with our children's teachers what we have learned.

We parents know the kind of physical environment our children have experienced. Five-year-old Jeff, recently moved from a crowded city apartment to the suburbs, may be especially reticent about leaving Mother at the Kindergarten door. His play experiences up to this time always included his mother, who sat watching protectively from a nearby park bench. Contrast this with Joan, who has always had abundant space in which to play independently with neighborhood children. Mother just checks activities occasionally from the kitchen window. The farm boy, again in contrast, who moves to the city has no doubt had even greater freedom under entirely different circumstances.

Useful Information

As parents, we have important information about the family as a unit. Brothers and sisters and their positions in the family group can account in part for differences in children's school behavior. We feel certain that an only child's first word would rarely be "bang." However, baby sister Joan delightedly shouted "bang!" instead of the customary "Mama" or "Da-Da" as she toddled after Jeff. Does Grandma or

Uncle Judd live within the family group? The nature and quality of their relationship with the child, his brothers and sisters, and his parents have real influence on Johnny seated in the second row, third seat back. Rarely will Johnny verbalize the family picture; but he brings these feelings, happy or otherwise, to school. Questioned tactfully, we parents are glad to communicate this information.

Parents have helpful information about the emotional responses of their children—what frightens them, what excites them, what angers them and what gives them enjoyment. After two mornings of crying when left at nursery school, Jeff said, "It's silly to cry anymore, but it's all right to just look a little sad when you leave, isn't it, Mommy?" It would seem to the parents writing here that anecdotal information of this nature might be useful to their child's teacher.

As parents, we are having abundant experience with special interests. Right now it's Sputnik, satellites and rockets. God, pets, all manner of hats with which he can change character, the latest gimmick inside a cereal box and worms also have an important place. While we wouldn't suggest that teachers build an entire curriculum on such bases, we can see a sensible reason for using these interests where helpful clues about what children are like would be needed.

Discipline, good and bad, successful and unsuccessful, has received stardom in the priorities people include in successful child-rearing. We have our exasperating moments and our rewarding ones. Teachers, we know, feel as we do. We can share with teachers what behavior pleases and upsets us most. Some

approaches that have worked for us might also work for the teacher. We have already experienced our children's reactions—the pouting, the belligerence, the deep hurt, the cheerful obedience and the enthusiastic cooperation. We are not suggesting that teachers use our methods of discipline. Rather, as parents we would hope teachers might feel free to discuss discipline with us and perhaps benefit from our experience of living day after day with the child entrusted to the teacher's care.

Teacher's Objectivity Needed

We need the teacher's point-of-view, too. We send our children to school so that they might learn the skills necessary for successful living in a situation apart from the world of home. We feel this wider, more impersonal and highly social atmosphere fits well the future plans for our children. Each individual must be prepared to move from the security of home and parents and establish himself as an independent individual in society. Consequently, children's teachers can provide us, as parents, with a necessary degree of objective measurement. As parents, our expectations and desires for our children and for ourselves often

cloud our vision, making us unable to see our children as they really are. Lest our dreams and not our children's be realized, we seek the knowledge and understanding only teachers can give us.

It is important for us to know how our children fit into this group life outside the home. Are they a part of, rather than set apart from, other children? Are they accepting their share of responsibility? Are they sometimes leaders and sometimes followers? With the desire to act appropriately for the welfare of our children, we need to know their intellectual capacities. What is each of our children inherently capable of achieving? How closely does his achievement correspond to his ability? What might we do at home that would best assist our children?

As parents we have reinforced our constant firm belief that we all have a most important stake in the future of education in America. We look to teachers, the adults who play such an important part in the lives of our children, for a point of view that, when placed side by side with ours, will result in a better education for our children both at home and in school.



CHILDREN LIVE MATH ALL DAY LONG, SAYS DR. ALICE V. KELIHER IN THE FEBRUARY *Grade Teacher*. Bicycle contests determine who is *first*, therefore determining who produces the greatest speed. Six asks ten what *time* it is because he must be home in *ten* minutes. Ten plays Scrabble and has to figure *double* and *triple* word scores, as well as *totals*.

Informal arithmetic experiences dominate the child's out-of-school day. Do teachers make full use of them? asks Dr. Keliher. Her answer is *no*. There are many ways to use arithmetic during the class day. Some of them: records of attendance, lunch orders, numbers to see school nurse, doctor or dentist, books on hand, many others.

Arithmetic ought to be one of the most exciting and real subjects of study in the classroom, Dr. Keliher concludes. However, teachers in their zeal to move children through the textbooks and workbooks are missing many of the concrete experiences that make arithmetic meaningful to children. Connect the abstract with real experiences, she says. It is rewarding to hear, "Gosh, I see that now. It's like the way my bike speedometer works." Or, "Gee, that's easy now. I never knew that when I split a candy bar in half I was really doing fractions."—By permission, from *Education Summary* (Feb. 5, 1958), A. C. Croft Publications, New London, Conn.

Parents react to their schools

Parents of twenty-four elementary schools of a metropolitan county in Florida, participating in a public opinion survey, tell what they liked and what they disliked about the schools. The survey, financed by Kellogg Foundation and conducted as part of a leadership study by the University of Florida, College of Education, is reported by Hulda Grobman, editorial assistant, Kellogg Leadership Study, University of Florida, Gainesville.

IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS, PUBLIC relations is a critical area—often the critical factor in maintaining adequate public financing of school facilities and operational expenses. Parental reaction to schools is a much-used and abused consideration. According to the more verbal commentators on our elementary schools in America today, public opinion as well as research seem focused almost exclusively on curriculum and buildings, with the major dissatisfaction on lack of buildings and lack of traditional subjects taught with traditional methods. Apparently there are no substantial areas of real satisfaction with public schools.

Because only a small segment of the public is highly verbal through mass communication media, the question should be raised: Is this what school patrons really think and want?

A recent patron public opinion survey in twenty-four elementary schools of a metropolitan county in Florida included three general items at the end of the schedule: What is your most favorable experience with your school? What is your least favorable experience with your school? What is the most urgent need for improvement in your school? About two-thirds of the parents returning questionnaires responded to at least one of these open-ended questions. Because there was no limiting of parents' reactions to specific areas of school activity, they were free to react on virtually any-

thing about the school that was concerning them. Their responses should reveal what is in their minds, free from any bias of the survey team.

What Parents Liked

Parents gave a large number of favorable reactions to their schools. Although there were two opportunities to give unfavorable reactions and only one item for favorable responses, on the whole there were many more favorable than unfavorable reactions given. In seventeen of the twenty-four schools, more favorable than unfavorable items were given. In only six was the reverse true. In one school the number of negative and positive reactions were tied.

It was obvious that the schools were a source of personal pride and identification to parents. Many parents said they had favorable experiences with their schools or no changes to recommend.

What parents liked most was good human relations. The most frequent favorable responses concerned the teacher's attitude toward children and parents. This feeling about teacher attitude and cooperation, a real liking of the teacher, was generally formed through personal contacts between teacher and parent, most often at interviews on parent-teacher conference days, but also on school visits or teacher visits to the pupil's home.

Again and again parents expressed

MAN
satisfaction with the teacher's interest, willingness to cooperate with the parents, welcoming of parents for conferences, consideration of their individual child or of all the children as individuals. Parent conferences were welcome opportunities. Typical parent statements were:

"Good initiation by teachers for newcomers to the school."

"We feel we are welcome any time."

"The teacher is never too busy to talk to a parent."

"The teacher takes time to make complimentary remarks about our boy's progress and conduct."

"The teachers are very kind."

"Talking to teachers who really make me feel they like children and enjoy working with them."

"I appreciate the teacher's home visits."

In some schools, the principal is a major factor in the parents' feeling of satisfaction with the school; in others, he is rarely mentioned. In one school, more than half the parents replying to the open-ended questions mentioned the principal as important to their positive feelings about the school. At the other extreme, another principal was mentioned by less than 5 per cent of those responding. The principal may be an integral visible part of the parent-school relations picture, or he may be a behind-the-scenes person as seen by parents.

Other positive feelings concerned general environment, pleasure of working in PTA or other channels to help with the school, child's attitude toward school, school patrol, school lunches, extra-curricular or enrichment activities—as:

"My child is happy here."

"When my son entered school he was immediately taken into everything."

"I like the band and orchestral music programs."

"I like the religious chapels held regularly."

"I became favorably impressed with the school as a home-room mother."

"The principal is kind and considerate."

"Lunchroom procedure is good."

"I like the prompt notification when my child is sick."

What Parents Disliked

On the negative side, *greatest parental disapproval was indicated on building and equipment* in those schools which were marginal or submarginal in building or equipment, where there was untenable overcrowding, double or triple sessions, outdated buildings or insufficient grounds. Equipment shortages and insufficient books to go around also came in for censure.

Considerable disapproval was expressed in all schools on curriculum and teaching. Although in some instances this criticism was on inadequate emphasis of traditional subjects and traditional teaching methods, more frequently it concerned extra-curricular and nonacademic subjects and activities. For example:

"There should (should not) be dancing at school."

"The school needs sex instruction by a tactful teacher."

"I disapprove of what they do in physical education."

"More time should be given to the 3 R's."

"They should forego some gym periods and put time on remedial reading."

"My child was forced onto the physical education field even when I asked that he be excused for physical reasons."

"The teachers have too much red tape."

"The school needs more moral teaching."

"There should (should not) be homework every night."

"I object to the progressive program—constraint by pupil is not enforced."

"Workbooks from one grade to another are not consistent."

"Why don't we have a school band?"

Parents did mention dissatisfaction with reading instruction in many instances. But there seemed to be no particular relation between this dissatisfaction

tion and adequacy of the instructional program. Thus the concern may well have been based on lack of information of test achievement results and methodology and may merely reflect the popular hysteria over *Why Johnny Can't Read*, rather than on the actual ability of children at these schools to read.

Major dissatisfaction was indicated with the countywide elementary grading system which many patrons do not understand in terms of intention or meaning of report cards. Other less frequently mentioned areas of dissatisfaction concerned bus, discipline, lunches, teacher and pupil attitude of unfriendliness, lack of cooperation, lack of fairness, teacher pay or preparation, teacher-pupil ratio, safety provisions, parent organizations and their activities, principal's activities, money-raising events. Attitudes were:

"At PTA meetings, when parents are invited to inspect rooms and meet teachers, the rooms should be open and the teachers present."

"Why the formality of PTA meetings when everything is decided by the Board at their earlier meetings?"

"They 'nickel and dime' you to death."

"I resent the punishment without careful determination of who is at fault."

"I do not think the PTA meetings should be monopolized by the principal."

"Principal refused to listen to me and other parents."

"The lunches are not well cooked."

"I dislike detention of bus pupils without notice to parents. Children miss the bus and parents expect them."

"The principal runs everything."

"I do not understand the grading system."

"I cannot tell from the report card how well my child is doing."

"I cannot understand where my child stands from the report card without letter grades."

"It is very hard to get a chance to talk to the teachers."

"Some teachers are influenced by the status of the child's parents."

"We feel looked down upon by the faculty because we are trailerites."

Conclusions

Parents have some very clear and consistent areas of concern about their schools, areas which are often not the most publicized ones.

1. The area of greatest positive concern with the school is teacher attitude and cooperation. Parents want to know the teacher and how he feels about their child and children in general. The areas of greatest negative concern are shortages of buildings, equipment and supplies, double sessions and teaching and curriculum, broadly interpreted.

2. Parents want to feel personally involved with their school, with the teachers, with the principal. They value parent-teacher conferences. They also receive favorable impressions through working with the school in PTA, as room parents, as resource people, or by assisting on special projects.

3. Parental concern with teaching and curriculum is not primarily with the 3 R's but is spread throughout the school's activities and program.

4. Parents are concerned about safety provisions for their children, adequacy of lunch programs, bus transportation.

5. The principal can be a major positive factor in a school's public relations when parents come in frequent contact with him.

To sum up these parental impressions, the major concern is with human relations in the school, once the very basic needs in buildings and equipment are met. Schools which have spent considerable time and energy in working closely with parents should feel reassured by these findings. Their efforts obviously have been appreciated and have resulted in closer patron feeling toward the school. The parent conference days have certainly been an excellent parent relations media in such schools.

In the light of this data, schools which have not worked closely with parents may want to explore the possibilities of expanding personal contacts. They may find that these activities are not a peripheral luxury but time well spent in furthering their educational objectives.

Parents Can Help . . . through the PTA

The parent's role in helping to improve the school through participation in the program of the Parent Teachers Association is presented by Charles H. Dent, associate professor, The University of Texas, Austin.

SCHOOL PEOPLE, PARENTS AND OTHER interested laymen are raising many questions today regarding parent participation in improving educational opportunities for all children and youth. Many valuable insights into such questions may be gained from examining the Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the Department of Elementary Principals, *Parents and the Schools*,¹ which includes the following thoughts:

1. How do we explain why parent participation is so desirable? Why do parents do it? What satisfactions do they gain from this sort of work? Is this interest inevitable, or does it have to be encouraged and fostered?

2. How willing are the principal and the staff to give the time necessary to effect curriculum change through parent participation? Is the principal willing to provide guidance without domination? What of the teacher? Is he to be asked to take on one more responsibility: that of guiding parents who participate in some classroom activity?

3. Where is the line between professional responsibility and lay assistance in school improvement? Who does what and how?

4. When parents seem not to understand our program, perhaps we could profit from asking ourselves, "What has been communicated to them? How can we ever establish the kind of communication necessary to develop a friendly relationship between our school and the community?"

5. Can parents do more than serve us in

such ways as passing bond issues and tax levies; in buying pianos, motion picture projectors, library books, and other instructional aids not provided in the school budget; in electing school board members; in the passing of school legislation?

6. Is it desirable to have parents assist the schools in re-examining the purposes of public education, in assisting in instruction, in re-designing the curriculum, or in the evaluation of the school program?

7. Are there values to be reaped? How can all this interest in parent participation be related most effectively to the government of our public school system?

Although these questions are taken out of the context of their original presentation, they do establish a suggestive cross-section of professional concerns for one of the major issues in educational planning today; namely, parent participation in helping the school. Secondly, this somewhat illustrative list of concerns seems to dramatize a lack of emphasis on understanding the program of the parent-teacher association *per se*, as the vehicle for expediting desired cooperative procedures. The organizational structure already exists within the PTA for accomplishing much of the work in improving the school. As professional educators understand the basic objects of the PTA's and the ways in which they can work for school improvement, they will want to seek out the PTA as an organization which can accomplish mutual goals of parents and teachers.

¹ The National Elementary Principal, *Parents and the Schools*, Thirty-Sixth Yearbook (Washington, D. C.: Department of Elementary Principals, National Education Association, September 1957), Vol. XXXVII, No. 1.

It is proposed, therefore, for the consideration of parents and educators alike, that parents can help more to aid educational progress by working with educators as regular members of the PTA than they can by working with them as members of school-sponsored curriculum committees or so-called advisory councils. Let's take a look at some of the reasons for making such a statement. Let's also review some of the conditions under which this might be true.

Of necessity, the foregoing statements make it mandatory for teachers to understand the workings of the PTA and to identify with its many constructive procedures. Our approach will be not to try to answer the seven questions which have been raised directly but to let them serve as a backdrop against which is summarized some recent trends in the development of the Parent-Teacher Association's program as they seem to throw light on such queries.

Parents are placing much emphasis on understanding the well-defined objects of the PTA in its work toward school-home improvement.

This seems to mean that members do not spend weeks of valuable time restating their philosophy as they begin their work each fall. The association has its built-in starting points for each new year's work which include such things as promoting ideas, raising standards, and securing past gains in the interest of children and youth. True it is, however, that the members are trying constantly to bring new meanings to these objects, because a group's understanding of them often determines the extent of its helpfulness. For example, time was when the PTA worked for the welfare of children and youth through plant-

ing on the schoolground shrubbery which died in the summertime for lack of care and had to be replaced in the fall. Now the PTA sees itself as working for the welfare of children and youth through developing understandings of important principles which help to translate policies or objects into action. Illustrations of such principles stated in capsule form include: self-education in discovering and understanding responsibilities; timely action in doing the right thing at the right time; and advancing and expanding concerns in consolidating successful efforts and expanding areas of interest.² These principles can be applied to acquiring understanding of such goals as citizenship education, mental health concepts, and new ventures in partnership between the home and school in working for the welfare of children.

Parents are experimenting with new techniques in putting over PTA programs which lead to increased understanding.

So-called experts who only lecture are being replaced by trained discussion leaders who give much opportunity for audience participation. More audiovisuals, particularly films, are being used as a basis for group discussions intended to improve parent-teacher-child relations. Buzz sessions are handled expeditiously with leaders, recorders and resource persons being assigned quickly for assessing group reactions to panels, symposiums, dramatizations, role playing, demonstrations or tape recordings. PTA meetings are beginning and ending on time as ways are being found to streamline the business session.

² From an address by Jim Snowden, member, Board of Managers, National Congress of Parents and Teachers, delivered at State Convention of Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers in Galveston, Texas, November 20, 1957, entitled "Alpha Revisited."

Parents are adapting the content of centrally planned PTA program suggestions to the interests and concerns of a particular group or neighborhood.

No longer do program chairmen feel obliged to follow verbatim the monthly program suggestions offered by the state office. Likewise, state program outlines may present an adaptation of a national theme such as mental health or juvenile delinquency by emphasizing some particular phase of it. Thus, different PTA units within a given region may be covering the same general ideas, but they will be doing so in a way that seems timely to their constituents.

Parents are calling on teachers to feature children's and youth's thinking in meetings.

This year in Texas, children and youth panels have been exceedingly popular because of parents' urging of teachers not to present letter-perfect, rehearsed dramatizations but to present boys and girls as they extemporaneously discuss such topics as improving parent-child relationships or home and school understandings. A by-product of this kind of program has been the renewed welcome parents have received at junior and senior high schools as they understood through these discussions ways in which their youngsters sanctioned their participation at these levels. Parents of children from two to twelve should resolve not to be drop-out parents when their children reach secondary schools.

Parents are finding ways of passing on information and knowledge more effectively to each other.

Each year at state workshops leaders share ideas with each other in making plans for the months ahead. District workshops are planned as follow-up

meetings to state workshops and are often followed by council and local unit workshops. State and national conventions lend impetus to the working of parents and teachers. Printed materials, including books and pamphlets, are becoming vital to the work of parents, as are the publications of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and those of state congresses. In planning parent-teacher workshops, group processes are utilized to demonstrate techniques which may be adapted locally.

Parents are finding ways of using consultants effectively.

For example, consultants from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health at The University of Texas worked with the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers for three years to train district leaders in mental health processes, resources, materials, principles and methods so that these leaders might better serve local units in their own areas. They are also aiding in the Texas Congress' emphasis on youth development for the years 1957-1959 with a view to helping parents understand better the symptoms and causes of human behavior. In addition, they are attempting to ascertain to what extent adult leaders are developing their own potentials for leadership and resourcefulness in planning.

Parents are taking a long-range look at their program planning activities as they realize that an individual's as well as an organization's growth is a slow process.

Parents, as members of PTA's, soon learn to take a several-month look at what is going to happen program-wise in a given school year, a two-year look at the functions of a particular local office, and a three-year look at the program

theme of a state administration. This procedure is especially helpful in planning parent-teacher participation in school improvement when emphases in curriculum development are anticipated and are purposefully related to expressed parent concerns.

Parents are viewing human development as a continuous process and are striving to deal with children and youth more effectively, instead of less effectively, at each succeeding level.

In so doing, parents are recognizing that the home has the child completely from 0 to 2 years only! It is during the 3 to 5 years that organized efforts are sustained to help the child make adjustments to groups outside the home either through nursery schools, kindergartens or church schools. The child is in the primary grades from the ages of 6 to 8 where his big adjustments include relating his immediate home environment to his school and community and to the many helpers who reside therein to aid his induction into society. The child is in the intermediate grades from 9 to 11 years and at that time acquires social living concepts that make his life's contributions to the state, nation, continent and world more meaningful. From 12 to 14 years of age the child is becoming a youth who is engaging in many junior citizenship activities under the wise direction of home, school and community. And then from 15 to 17 years of age, the youth is mastering the skills of social adjustment and the knowledges and understandings of disciplines that make possible future ventures into a chosen vocation. At each of these stages of growth, the developmental tasks which the youngster must accomplish are not mutually exclusive of each other. Why can't parents and teachers help young-

sters in accomplishing these tasks through working as members of the PTA? Why do administrators and teachers fail to recognize that the organizational structure already exists within the PTA for improving school experiences for boys and girls?

When educators begin to answer such questions as these and the others raised in the beginning of this article, they will be taking a look at some of the conditions under which parents can help the schools improve. Undoubtedly some of the conclusions reached will include these:

Administrators and teachers must be sure they are cultivating the essence of the seven trends in improved working opportunities which are being developed currently through the PTA:

- mutually understanding well-defined objects and bringing new meanings to them
- experimenting with new techniques for communicating ideas
- developing new ways for disseminating information and involving people
- providing children and youth with opportunities for critical constructive reactions to programs and ideas
- taking a long-range look at program emphases through cooperative planning
- using consultants effectively
- viewing human development as a continuous process, necessitating the participation of parents at high school level.

As parent-teacher objects are achieved, parents must be given opportunities to help in school improvement by

- bringing their particular points of view to planning situations
- giving out their ideas
- getting suggestions for improving their own understandings
- looking ahead jointly in terms of calculated consequences
- planning next steps in school improvement together.

Yes, parents can help . . . through the PTA!

Some children can't laugh

A study on the relationship between social status of sixth-grade pupils and what they said was funny in selected excerpts from children's literature is reported by Elliott D. Landau, assistant professor of elementary education, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

IF YOU HAVE EVER EXPERIENCED THE HUGE success of a joke at the lunch table, its demise at home and its rebirth on the sidelines of a tennis match, then you will understand some of what you are about to read. It is commonly thought that children laugh at the same things. Afternoon TV programs for the youngsters rely upon the notion that all children are alike. There are even some teachers who still believe that "if you've taught one, you've taught them all." Comedians are surprised when their humor "goes over big" with one crowd and gasps painfully with another.

Beatrice Hurley reported (1) some of the results of this author's doctoral dissertation. It was her contention that "once in a while the child and the adult can laugh together."¹ Faith in this belief was the motivating factor in the research pursued during 1955. The results indicated that *all* children do not laugh at the same thing but, more important, that there seems to be a group of children who laugh least or not at all.

Research has shown that "our whole system of social values . . . is probably based on a social status scale." (2) Davis states that "our knowledge of social class training is now sufficient to enable us to say that no studies can henceforth generalize about 'the child.'" We shall always have to ask, "A child of what social class, in what cultural environment?" (3) Neugarten noted that children's concepts of acceptable friends varied with social class status. (4) Hartshorne and May were able to determine that concepts of right and wrong were influenced by class status. (5) Harrower found that concepts of punishment differ with children of differing social class levels. (6) Studies indicate rather emphatically that

whether we focus upon child-rearing habits (7) or class differentials in expectations of life at birth, (8) the ugly head of "group differences in social values" (9) rises before us and unfortunately does not, Phoenix-like, crumble to ashes before scrutiny.

Therefore, the purpose of the investigation was to determine whether a relationship existed between the social class status of sixth-grade pupils and what they said was funny in selected excerpts from children's literature. As is frequently the case in research that is not predestined, results somehow manage to becloud the issue, unseat the hypothesis and bring to light new and fascinating information that suggests the ineptness of the original plan. There was no exception here.

Study on Funniest Literature

An unusually simple research design² was developed. Authorities in the field of children's literature suggested the titles of children's books suitable for fifth and sixth graders which were, in their experience, the funniest they could recommend. Excerpts from these books were chosen for their appeal to children. A total of one hundred and twenty children in the sixth year of three New York City public schools and one Westchester County school were selected and placed into three social class groups based upon paternal occupation.³ The intelligence quotient, sex, reading-age grade, religion and family background were also noted for each child. Half of each group heard the examiner read the

² Owing to space restrictions, a full account of procedures, statistical devices and interpretations has been omitted.

³ The Warner Index of Social Class Status was the basis for the final modification utilizing only the father's occupation as an index of status.

¹ B. D. Hurley, "What Children Find Humorous," *Childhood Education* (May 1956), pp. 424-27.

twenty-six excerpts and in different sessions; the other half read the excerpts to themselves. A rating sheet accompanied each reading and all children rated each excerpt on a 1-6 scale as to the degree of funniness of the anecdote. Then they indicated what part of the text was funny and, interestingly enough, why they thought it was humorous. When the raw score for the total and individual reaction to the twenty-six excerpts was calculated for each child in each group, analysis of variance using two means at a time was calculated. This was also calculated for the other variables (religion, IQ, etc.).

Findings

The findings of the study showed that there were no significant differences in the total reactions to the humorous excerpts or to the individual reaction to each of the twenty-six excerpts when sex, IQ, reading grade, religion or national background were the variables subjected to statistical analysis. There were significant differences,⁴ however, between the middle class group and both the upper and lower class groups. Both the upper and lower group enjoyed the excerpts significantly more than the middle class children. In other words, the capacity to enjoy funny incidents was almost totally lacking in the middle class group. Indeed, of the twenty-six excerpts presented to this group there were only *three* that even elicited mild enjoyment! In twenty-five out of twenty-six excerpts both SC I (Social Class I—upper group) and SC III (Social Class III—lower group) outscored SC II. On twelve items SC II children rated them no higher than 1.85 out of a possible 6, thus in effect saying that on almost half of the items they saw nothing funny at all. SC III only rated one excerpt as being “not funny at all.” SC I also only rated one excerpt as low as 1.85.

Supported Other Studies

One may say from a review of the scores that the middle class children were almost apathetic. This is the finding which intrigued the researcher since it supported the studies which hold that the middle class child (sons or daughters of white-collar workers and semi-

professionals) is inhibited, self centered, other directed, over respectful of authority. (10) Green (11) has stated that the middle class child is an admonished and parent-absorbed child more interested in individual success than anything else. Many of the children in this study who were classified “middle” were occupants of a private middle-income housing project that provides acres of grass for children but plants “Keep off the Grass” signs on every inch of it. The teachers of these children and of a similar group maintain that they are almost “dared” to teach them anything. Parental competition for siring the brightest child is so keen that teachers have to literally leave school by the back door the day after report cards are distributed.⁵ Being a resident of this same project the author knows that the object of every family here is to “get out to the suburbs.”

Beatrice Hurley maintains that it is good to laugh, and so it is. My experience with the middle class children who cooperated in the study almost precluded the findings. Whereas in the Westchester School and in the lower-class school the experimenter found his warm-up periods⁶ easy to start, the children in the middle group resisted as if unable to free themselves sufficiently to laugh. Then, too, during the individual interviews (which were taped) the infamous verbosity of the middle class child was not evident. Lower class children were usually very eager to talk, while upper class children enjoyed the sessions in a very adult way.

Wolfenstein, (12) who used a similar interview technique, concludes her study by suggesting that “children from other groups in our society” (13) might react differently to her methods of investigation.

Not by Bread Alone

Allison Davis’ admonition, noted earlier, should more and more find its way into the language of teachers. All children are not like all others. Or as the semanticist, Hayakawa, says, “Cow₁ is not cow₂.” (14) Clearly, we do our social structure an injustice if we infer

⁴ In an unpublished article, “‘Middle’ Ain’t Good Enough for the Middle Class,” the author expands upon his theme.

⁶ Before every session of reading the humorous excerpts the experimenter provided a warm-up session of informal banter with the groups in the belief that laughter takes place best when children are “in the mood.”

from our study of American culture that we are a pea-in-the-pod nation. Our problem as educators is to understand and accept children from all class levels; and, in the case of those who teach the "ever upward and onward" middle class, this becomes doubly important. If it is true that some children can't laugh, then it is our task to slowly remove the stumbling blocks, to lessen the seriousness of existence and thereby enable all children to enjoy the comic fruits of life. Indeed, we do not live by bread alone.

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Courtesy, Earl Dible,
Santa Monica Unified School District, Calif.

Posters for school clean-up campaign



How wide is the door open?

"The door must swing both ways—in and out," says Lutie Chiles, William Jewell College, Liberty, Missouri. "This means there must be much sharing—much give-and-take." Teachers welcome parents at school and parents invite teachers to their homes at the proper time. This helps to assure a mutual understanding of the child and to interpret the home life and the school life.



Courtesy, Linwood School, Kansas City, Mo.

MY DOOR WAS OPEN. FROM THE FAR END of Jewell Hall I heard footsteps. I wondered what college student could be enrolling so late in the day. I put my desk in order and was just closing the window when a voice behind me said, "Excuse me, please. Are you the lady who used to teach kindergarten?" I turned around to see a stalwart fellow of six feet looking down at me. Those big brown eyes were familiar; their warm twinkle I knew. Just then a lock of black curly hair fell down over his forehead and I knew it had to be Gary!

"Gary!" I cried (in the same way I had heard returning students greet one another all day long). "Gary, where did you come from?"

"Well, that's a long story, but one of the fellows told me if I'd come up here on this floor I'd find an open door and you'd be here. Gee, I'm glad to see you — an' I'm glad you remembered me."

How could I forget? Thirteen years vanished. I saw the shy little brown-eyed boy dressed in spankin' new blue overalls. He stood at the kindergarten door looking much like the picture in *Small Rain* which illustrates the scripture:

I am but a little child;

I know not how to go out or come in.

Here was a new face. Most of our hundred children we knew, but here was one little fellow whose home we had not visited. Neither had he been to pay a pre-kindergarten visit in the spring. I walked over to him and said, "Come right on in. This is your kindergarten room and I am one of your teachers."

He was awed by the whole procedure—awed at the size of the room (it was barny and big) and a bit frightened at the large number of children. By the time we reached the children he was quite tense. He held tightly to my hand and stayed very close. Bit by bit he became more relaxed, and by mid-morning he was

enough at home to enjoy exploring the block boxes with other children.

Several days later when I felt we had become fast friends, I asked, "Gary, how would you like to have Mrs. Mitchell and me take you home tomorrow?" A brick wall seemed to immediately form between us. His face became clouded; his brow furrowed, and he said rather deliberately, "Oh, I don't believe I would if I was you 'cause you got to go over a whole lot of bridges and through a whole lot of damage to get there."

We knew Gary wasn't ready for us to take him home. Later perhaps. Frequently his father stopped to chat as he let him out of the truck in the morning, and once his mother came along. It was a red-letter day for Gary when his daddy first visited his room; and it was a red-letter day for his teachers, too, for we felt we were making real progress. The father came frequently to watch his son at work, to share the good news of a raise, to find what he could do to help his son. He was eager for his little boy to have every possible advantage.

Latchstring Out

Finally the great day came. It was just at the close of the year. Gary burst into the kindergarten room and in breathless haste said, "Daddy says you can come see us now if you want to. Mamma, she's almost got the yard swept and Daddy's already bought us some weiners for a weiner roast."

"Well, best we go tomorrow if the weiners are bought," I whispered to Mrs. Mitchell. The day came. We climbed in the car to go to Gary's house. His heart nearly beat out of his little blue shirt. It was the day of days for Gary—and his teachers, too.

He had been right. We did have to go over a whole lot of bridges and through a whole lot of damage to get there. When

we arrived sure enough, the yard had been literally swept. The little tar-paper house stood in a yard just off the river bank. Driftwood had been piled all around the edges of the yard.

No party was ever more carefully planned than was Gary's weiner roast. The fire was laid; the sticks were ready—and so was Gary. What a glorious time we did have! When we left, the timid little mother said, "Do come back. We'll be so glad to have you. Just remember our latchstring is always on the outside to you." It had been worth waiting for!

When the "last day" came, Gary lingered behind—not to leave a present nor to slip a parting kiss—but to ask a very real question. "Teacher, next year when I come back to the first grade, will your door be open?"

Door Swings Both Ways

Will my door be open? How is it opened and by whom? These are vital questions which require definite answers. True, the teacher must open his own door, but he must first have the freedom to do so; and that freedom comes directly through the principal and the superintendent of schools.

Kansas City's superintendent, James A. Hazlett, has done a magnificent job of opening the school door. He recognizes that only as parents and patrons are made welcome to visit and participate in school activities can they genuinely understand what the schools are doing for their children. In like manner, a teacher can more readily appreciate and understand a child when he knows and understands the home.

In good teaching, children and their teachers are living and learning together. This means, then, there must be much sharing—much give-and-take. The door must swing both ways—in and out.

Rewarding Experience

Early in the school year, preferably before school formally opens, many teachers find it a rewarding experience to visit in the homes of their pupils in order to become acquainted or to renew friendships. In communities where this has been done one finds a warm spirit between teacher and pupil and, certainly, an appreciative parent.

Within the early weeks of September teacher and pupils may have a tea or coffee for the parents of their room. One forethoughtful teacher has a schedule of possible times one may visit during the next six weeks. She places the schedule where mothers and fathers can fill in a convenient time to return for observation of the class in regular work. A day or two before their scheduled visiting day, the child reminds his parents that he and the teacher are looking forward to their visit. The helpful principal of this teacher notes the hours when she expects visitors and takes over her teaching duties after the parents have observed the class at work. This allows teacher and parents to discuss any phase of school work or any question related to the child which either feels should be discussed. Very wisely the teacher brings the pupil into the conference before the parents leave and all feel it has been a good visit. This, incidentally, is a sixth grade—not a primary grade as one might think. After one such conference, a little girl walked home with her mother and father. As they left the playground she sighed deeply, "Gee I'm glad you all came because now I know you and Miss Jones and I know all the same stuff."

There are scores of parents in every community who are timid about visiting the school. They come to enroll the kindergarten child and possibly the first grader. They come—maybe—to Open House during American Education Week

and to the Christmas program. But when that is done the visiting is over. They really haven't seen their children at work; therefore, they don't fully understand the school's program. We must help these parents feel they are welcome at school. It is just like meeting up with good friends on the street. We say, "Do come to see me sometime!" and they never come. But when we set a time and say, "Come next Tuesday; I'll expect you at 2:00 p. m.," we will have guests. So it is at school. Most parents wait for a special invitation and they want to feel that they are really welcome to visit.

Warmth of Personnel

Some teachers find it difficult to visit with parents when they do come. Classrooms are crowded; there is no place to talk without interruptions. Some schools have small rooms set aside for conference rooms. Such rooms are available for parent-teacher conferences, committee meetings, school and community interests. On a recent visit to a Kansas City school, I overheard the school secretary booking dates for the conference room. From the conversation, I learned that the conference room in that school is booked solid for weeks in advance.

In the same school we felt the pulse of the school and the warmth of its personnel as we walked through the halls. Bulletin boards had been wisely used. The daily work of the school was in evidence, and interesting placards briefly explained the work which accompanied the displays. Often we do a most interesting project but fail to tell our story. When we open our door we must be proud of what others see and hear. It must represent our best.

Many fathers and mothers have work which prevents them from visiting during regular school hours. Much as they would like to visit their child's room, they

can't. The alert teacher learns early in the school year which parents have such schedules, and he does something at frequent intervals which keeps the father and mother in touch with the school program. Border Star School sends home a weekly news sheet. This letter carries school news of interest to the whole family, announcements of coming events, notes on safety, Parent-Education notes, P.T.A. events, and any items of interest to the school community.

Genuine Interest

Perhaps the teacher takes three or four minutes to write a brief personal note to the parents about a child's work. The note may be in commendation of a child's work or behavior; it may be a suggestion of ways in which the child needs to grow; it may be just a friendly note which lets the parents know the teacher is genuinely interested in the girl or boy. Time? Of course, it takes time. Anything worth while takes time. This is worth a great deal to parents who must work to hold body and soul together.

When we invite guests into our homes we visit and share experiences with one another. A good hostess brings her guests into the conversation and makes it easy for them to contribute to the joy of the visit. So do good teachers. An enthusiastic young teacher found that she had several nationalities represented in her room. Her zeal for living and learning with her children knew no bounds. She capitalized on this advantage and immediately made note of the nationalities represented in her room. As occasions arose, when parents of different nations and cultures could contribute to the class study, these mothers and fathers were asked to come to the school to make whatever contribution they could. It is difficult to know who profited most—parents or pupils. Certainly, the parents went

away with the feeling that they belonged to the school and the school belonged to them.

A Coveted Privilege

It has been nearly ten years since Elaine, a lovely little Czechoslovakian girl, slipped her hand in mine and said, "Two years from today and I'll be a citizen of the United States." The thought sent a thrill through my whole being; it brought the other thirty-five seventh graders quickly to the realization that citizenship was a coveted privilege. We began discussing what it means to become a citizen. The discussions became more and more involved until finally we found ourselves visiting the evening naturalization classes held in downtown Kansas City. I had thought we could divide our class into three groups and all would get to go to one session. Space was limited, however, and the interest was so keen among pupils and their parents that we finished our series of visits in twelve weeks.

We had gone out into the larger community and had learned much. The children had developed real interest in the candidates for citizenship and fast friendships were formed. They entertained one another in their homes and a lovely appreciation for other cultures grew out of the visits.

One day there came a call from the office of the District Judge of the United States Court. His office had heard of the children's interest in this particular citizenship class, and the judge was asking us to be their guests at the Court hearing when citizenship would be bestowed upon the class.

The seventh graders were there in all their twelve-year-old dignity. It was an impressive and solemn occasion. The doors were closed. Court was opened. Alas! One old gentleman was late and

could not receive his papers. The children were greatly troubled. It was the dear old Belgian who had given them vivid descriptions of his country and who had taught them so much about gardening and the science of growing things. The next court session was three months away. Would he have to wait? What could they do to help?

Time passed. June came and school had closed. I was teaching in summer school. An urgent long-distance telephone call came. It was Don, one of the seventh-grade boys. He said, "Gee, Teach, can you come into Kansas City tonight? The old Belgian man is going to get his citizenship papers and we're going to see that he gets there on time this time. Can't you come, please?"

What did "Teach" do? She was there—early, too. The boys met me at the door and indicated where I was to sit, but didn't go in with me. They stayed in the foyer to open the door for their old friend, the Belgian, who was about to become a United States citizen. When the boys had seen him safely in line, they slipped in and sat one on either side of me. As the old gentleman walked slowly down the aisle, Don heaved a big sigh, "Boy, was I glad to see him through that door!"

And so it goes. The door must swing two ways—in and out. Sometimes we need a heavy doorstep to hold it open. Always we must keep a sincere warm welcome in our hearts.

Gary came by this morning. He hesitated at the office door, then came in. "I just wanted to show you a paper I just got back." It was marked, "Excellent work." The same lock of hair fell over his forehead as he bent to pick up the paper. He smoothed his hair back, gave one of those shy Freshman smiles, and as he turned the corner in the hall, called, "I'm glad your door was open."

Practices, Policies and Parents

School policies and practices have daily impact on parents; yet parents seldom take time to consider what is behind them or what they can or should do about them.

ONE HAS TO BE A PARENT TO FULLY understand the problems of parents. One has to be a teacher to understand how helpful or annoying parents can be in relation to school procedures. Often I have heard former teachers say: "Now that I am a parent I would be a better teacher if I were to return to the classroom, for I have more understanding both of children and of parents." Perhaps I am wrong, but it seems to me that parents usually approach school problems more sensibly with their second child than with their first.

There is a key thought in all of this. For most of us what we as parents can do about school practices and policies depends upon the quality of the human relations existing between parents and teachers in a particular school. Where friendly human relations exist then "communication" can take place; with easy communication, understanding follows readily. These terms—*human relations, communication, understanding*—are only labels for processes in which two or more persons share ideals, ideas and experiences; they do not apply to situations where one side "just tells" the other.

These statements are not new. They are trundled out every day in parent-teacher conferences, teachers' meetings and discussions of public relations. Unfortunately, many of us fail to apply such generalizations and principles to the everyday problems as they come up.

Contacts with school policies and practices are encountered by parents on about four levels. The first of these includes the "everyday" problems. The other three, although less tangible, are often even more important.

Everyday Problems

Nearly every day brings one or more of the following:

"Here's my report card, Mother. Teacher says you should sign your name and then write a note of comment."

"Mom, the school oral hygienist sent this slip saying I have two cavities which she hopes will be filled right away."

"Dad, I have to have a quarter for school. Several of us broke a small window and the principal says we have to pay for it."

One could go on indefinitely listing items illustrating the many impacts of school policies and practices upon parents. Most of us take these things in our stride—we sign the report card, we haul Junior off to the dentist, and we hand over the money. We may grumble a bit but we seldom take time to consider what is behind the situation or what we can or should do about it.

Many of these everyday events are rooted in the state school law. They may be state law plus the rules of the board of education and of the principal and staff of the school. Sometimes the pupils have helped to make the rules. Despite our grumbles we realize that most of the basic rules are sound, that they are a

necessary part of school management, and that they are applied to all parents.

Regardless of the law, however, we parents have a right to know why a given rule exists and why it is carried out in exactly the manner in which it reaches our doorstep. If we cannot get an explanation from the classroom teacher or the principal we can ask that a qualified person give an explanation at a PTA meeting. One of the best PTA talks I ever gave as a principal was to explain to parents "how to read" a report card.

After an explanation there is no reason why parents should not suggest improvements. The wording of the report card might be made clearer; the oral requests that come through the children might be better in writing; the wording of requests might clearly distinguish between things that are required and things that are desirable. Most teachers welcome friendly, helpful suggestions on these everyday matters.

School Board Selection

In a majority of our communities the members of the local school board are chosen by the voters. Theoretically, at least, the board of education represents all of the people. The board decides many policies lying behind the curriculum, selection of teachers, use of school buildings, total school program and standards of pupil achievement.

When the board is in control of special interest groups then its policies may not represent the wishes of the majority of parents and other citizens. This situation comes about when forward-looking parents are not really forward looking. A common problem is that many of the "best citizens" will not run for election without a little urging and communities often lack machinery for giving the necessary nudge. In

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some places the problem has been solved by PTA's, civic clubs, women's organizations and other groups forming a temporary nominating committee to seek out and support persons who would be devoted, unselfish board members.

By seeing to it that board members are truly representative of all of the people, parents can make an important contribution to school policies and practices. Actually, many "everyday problems" disappear when the quality of board membership is high.

Serving When Asked

To an increasing extent superintendents of schools and boards of education are interested in knowing the wishes and interests of all citizens. Sometimes they try to find out by having the president of the board take up "a trial balloon" in a speech or interview reported in the local newspapers. This approach has definite limitations. Often so many "guns" open up on the balloon that the board president is lucky if he survives the experiment.

A few communities have used opinion polls. These may be informal questions sent home with the children or they may be scientific surveys made by agencies equipped for such studies. In either case, parents have an opportunity to express real and honest opinions and the final results may influence school policies and practices.

In some communities parents are given a chance to serve on curriculum and other committees which are advisory to the board of education and the staff. The word "advisory" deserves emphasis because in setting up these committees the

school system cannot delegate its legal responsibilities. Nevertheless, what the staff and board decide to do is often improved because parents and other citizens have had a chance to discuss real problems and to suggest what they believe is best for the community as a whole.

Vote Wisely

The background of most public school policies and practices is the law of the state. It follows, therefore, that what parents want to see in their schools they had better "see" first in those who represent them in the state legislature. Examine closely a state where the schools have a well-developed program of financial support, sensible prescriptions for curriculum, high standards for teacher

education, and so on—and you will find that the state enacted laws under the guidance of legislators with statesmanlike qualities. Good laws do not just happen. Parents who want "good schools" as well as good school policies and practices can have them if they choose legislators who believe in the importance of education.

So . . .

When parents are disposed to blame the classroom teacher, the principal or the superintendent about school policies and practices they should first ask themselves: "What have I done to choose and support competent board members and state legislators? What am I doing to promote good human relations in my school neighborhood?"



Parents recently moved from Ecuador find security in friendly school atmosphere.

*Courtesy, Linwood School,
Kansas City, Mo.*

Parents and Teachers Learn Together

Ben M. Harris, formerly director of curriculum, Lafayette School District, California, now assistant in educational administration, University of California, reports some basic principles for planning and organizing successful parent study groups.

WHEN PARENTS ARE GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY to study, along with school personnel, certain problems of curriculum or child growth and development, it is extremely difficult to tell who are the learners and who are the teachers. One of the striking things about parent study groups, as they have been conducted in the Lafayette School District over the past three years, is the enormous amount of learning that seems to take place on the part of everyone involved. This includes teacher, child, parent and principal.

The Lafayette School District has conducted parent study groups on such topics as primary reading, study skills in the middle grades, emotional problems of learning, adolescent problems and gifted children. In approximately three years, some three hundred parents have participated in these study groups, as well as about twenty-five classroom teachers.

The usual procedure is to get suggestions from PTA or other parent groups as to the topic or topics that might be of special interest to parents. A joint planning committee of parents, school principal, several teachers, and consultants from the district office makes preliminary plans for a series of four to six meetings, studying various phases of the selected topic.

Activities in the study groups generally include lectures, panel discussions, motion picture films, and visits to classrooms for specially planned demonstra-

tions of teaching procedures. Literature is made available at all meetings of the study groups, and parents are encouraged to read widely and to participate fully in the discussions.

Classroom demonstrations have proven to be one of the most valuable aspects of parent study groups from the standpoint of the teachers and the parents. While teachers tend to be somewhat fearful of this experience in the beginning, they find it a very rewarding experience. Teachers who find themselves faced with the problem of planning a lesson to demonstrate some special aspects of the educational program find themselves doing some very deep thinking about the purposes that are important to their program and the techniques that they are using. Teachers are given an opportunity to be released from their classrooms to return to the meeting to discuss the demonstration with parents. This, too, has proven to be a rewarding experience. Teachers comment enthusiastically about the amount they learn in doing such demonstrations, even two years later.

Some basic principles for planning and organizing successful parent study groups seem to be the following:

1. The study group should focus upon a topic or topics of real interest to a sizable group of parents.
2. Parents, teachers and administrators should be involved in the planning of the parent study group meetings.
3. Plans for the program should remain flexible so that, as the interests and needs of

the group change, the activities of the study group can be modified accordingly.

4. Groups should remain small—fifteen to twenty-five members seem preferable.

5. Considerable informality should be maintained, with plenty of time and encouragement for participation by everyone involved.

6. A variety of activities should be planned so that it does not become simply another series of lectures.

7. Teachers should be relieved of classroom responsibilities so that they can participate fully in the parent study group meetings.

8. Parents should be asked to plan to participate with regularity and discouraged from joining the study group unless interest is high enough for regular attendance.

9. Meetings should be planned as exploratory sessions rather than as a program of high-pressure salesmanship directed toward parents.

10. Materials should be available which express various points of view about the topic under discussion.

11. Resources should be brought in from outside the school building—colleges, universities, specialized agencies, et cetera.

The values derived from parent study groups of this kind, as has been suggested previously, seem to accrue to everyone involved. For parents, it provides a better understanding of the school, greater peace of mind regarding the nature of the educational program, and greater confidence in carrying out parental responsibilities for the education of children. For the child, there seems to be a value derived from a recognition that Mother and Father are more interested in what they are doing at school and have a better understanding and appreciation of what is going on. Children's work often improves markedly as a result of parent participation in such study groups. For the teacher and other school personnel, values include a warmer relationship with parents, a feeling of oneness of purpose with the parental public, and a better understanding of the nature of the program which they are attempting to implement.

Courtesy, Mrs. E. R. Snyder, Pontiac, Mich.

Reporting through parent-teacher-child conference



Concerns for Children Are World Wide

... in Brazil

SINCE THE TIME WHEN BRAZIL WAS DISCOVERED, its educational system has been influenced by that of Europe. Back in the early days of colonization, Brazilian Indians were converted by the Jesuits, who had come from Portugal. Many things have changed since then and many new people have come to Brazil, but we can still notice the European influence in our civilization.

General Characteristics

Education is compulsory by law for children seven through twelve years of age. Before they reach the age of seven, children spend three years in nursery and kindergarten. Then follow four to five years in elementary school, seven years in secondary school, and a college education. The duration of college varies, according to the field. For example, law school requires five years and medical school six years.

The Brazilian educational system is very much centralized—primary education by the states and secondary and higher education by the federal government. Since the curriculum in general is uniformly fixed, students do not choose the courses they want to take. There are also many private schools in Brazil, subject to standards set by the government.

There is freedom of religious instruction, which is optional, depending on parents' approval. Every creed is allowed. There is no racial problem because of the fact that there has been a natural miscegenation of races since the beginning of colonization.

Educational Problems

Brazil is going through a notable period of development in many fields. This development is posing new problems and creating new needs. And yet schools have not grown enough to meet these needs.

There is a shortage of schools, teachers and materials. It is a recognized fact that the

amount of taxes spent for education is insufficient. Although we have many wonderful writers for children and many good books, we do not yet have enough to meet our needs. Elementary education is the one which suffers most from this, since Brazil spends more money with colleges than with all the elementary schools in the country.

In general the teachers are underpaid, and many of them have more than one job to supplement their income from school. Because of the lack of materials provided by the schools, teachers have to create their own or buy them out of their own money.

Crowding in schools is one of our biggest problems. Our population has increased rapidly, and there are not enough schools for everybody. Most schools operate in two daily shifts, but some of them in three and even in four shifts, because they maintain an evening course for adults and children older than fourteen. What generally occurs is that the daily school period, reduced to three or four hours a day, does not give enough time for the development of an ideal curriculum.

For children who need more economic help, most of the public schools provide some items of clothing, including the uniform used by most school children; books; pencils and other materials. Most of them also provide a daily hot plate of soup for each child. Those who are in a better economic situation pay a little money for the food. There are public health services throughout the country, and in many places the children can have direct medical and dental assistance in school.

Rural Education

Because Brazil is so big and its population more concentrated in some areas than in others, the different regions are not in the same level of development. We can say that

we have "islands of civilization"; some rural areas are not well developed. It is because of this variation that in some poor regions many children do not go to school, although education is compulsory by law.

Rural education has attracted the attention of the authorities, and many things have been done to help solve the problem. Schools have been established to prepare rural school teachers, buildings have been constructed, and special programs are being developed by the INEP (Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos). This organization now maintains a laboratory school and plans some new ones. Very well-planned audio-visual centers are going to begin functioning this year in different parts of Brazil, in cooperation with the I.C.A. (International Cooperation Administration). Agricultural clubs are being organized and 4-H clubs are functioning. It's interesting to observe that in Brazil 4-H clubs are called the 4-C's, because of their motto in Portuguese. Much accomplishment is hoped for in this field of rural education.

Vocational Education

Vocational education is, at the present moment, another one of our major concerns. Because our industry and agriculture are in a process of rapid development, there is an urgent need for technicians.

In 1946 the National Confederations of Industry and Commerce established training schools in these fields in many parts of Brazil, in agreement with the federal government. They have an apprenticeship program and provide for vocational guidance. Every person who employs minors who have not received a professional education is obliged to send them to one of the training schools for two hours a day during normal working hours and to pay for their expenses. This program is very important because it helps many children to complete their education, since many of them discontinued it to look for a job.

Beatriz Costa is a Brazilian teacher studying at Indiana University under the sponsorship of International Cooperation Administration. She is one of a group of teachers who will return to the new pilot center for elementary education in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil.

New Plans

There is a new plan for the preparation of teachers to begin in a "pilot center" in Belo Horizonte. A part of the staff members for this institution are now studying at Indiana University. Other pilot centers will be established progressively.

Also, a definite revision of elementary education is under way. Children are about eleven or twelve years old when they finish primary school. Under a federal statute they cannot be employed until they reach the age of fourteen. In order to cover this gap of about three years there is a plan to extend primary education for two more years to help those children who do not plan to have a secondary education. This extended primary education would give them a good basis not only in academic work but also in industrial shops and applied arts. This program has been stressed by Anísio Teixeira, one of Brazil's most outstanding educators.

We are aware of our problems and we are striving for a higher standard of education. A very efficient institute, the Institute of Professional Orientation and Selection, which has branches in many states, has been conducting some very valuable psychological studies.

We plan to help the public become more interested in school affairs; until today it has not been so close to schools as it should be. This is largely because of the fact that our educational system is administered by the government. It is hoped that the community in cooperation with government may share and participate closely in educational affairs.

It is time for the public and the governmental authorities to re-examine the financial support of elementary education, as well as some other points. Modernization of Brazil is noteworthy in many fields, especially in construction and industry. Education must keep pace with them. There is no doubt that industrial development, for example, requires more technicians which the schools must provide.

Education is an integral part of modern life. The development and expansion of primary schools are the keys to further progress in democratic Brazil, because an enlightened public is the basis for a nation's success.

News HERE and THERE

By FRANCES HAMILTON

New ACE Branches

Philippine Normal College ACE
Chicago Teachers College—North ACE,
Illinois

New Life Members

Jerome Leavitt, Portland, Oregon
Jim Cherry, Decatur, Georgia
Beth Griesel, Tacoma, Washington

Education Legislation

The *ACEI Plan of Action for 1957-1959* states that the International Association can "work for legislation in the best interests of children." These words rang in our minds as we read of legislation expected to be proposed in the Congress of the United States in the early part of 1958. This legislative program seemed to be focused upon secondary and higher education, with little attention to the important early years.

The President of ACEI wrote to the President of the United States. Her letter said in part:

Our members are seriously disturbed by the fact that the program overlooks the most important period of a child's life—the years when a child's interests and skills are first awakened and can be encouraged or allowed to die. As teachers of younger children, our members know that the guidance given the child at this time profoundly influences the learnings, habits and attitudes that he will carry into adult life. The teaching of mathematics begins in the early grades, as does scientific exploration. The lack of any provision for these important school years is a shocking omission.

Our Association wishes to do everything possible to help remedy this serious gap in the recommendations. It would be most unfortunate if at this time half-measures were taken to improve the education of only a segment of our population. Fortright action to improve education beginning with the earliest school years is required.

As this article is being written (in late January) we know that President Eisenhower and members of the Congress are aware of the omission and increasingly aware of the importance of the early and formative years of children's lives.

What is actually enacted into law depends on you. Your representatives in Congress need to have from you the facts you can give

them about children and their educational needs. Write or plan to see your Congressman or Senator at the earliest opportunity. Give him the information that will help him speak and act in behalf of children.

Action taken by members of ACEI to strengthen legislation in the United States may well be an example of the efforts needed in behalf of children in many countries of the world. Wherever you are, you are needed as a guardian of children's rights and as an advocate of continued improvement in their education and welfare.

Progress on ACEI Center Project

It was a *great* day! The Board of Zoning Adjustment had given approval to ACEI's use of the property on the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Quebec Street. On January 29 (three days before the contract expired), papers were signed deeding the land to ACEI. This transaction marks an important step toward the achievement of our goal—a permanent ACEI Center in Washington, D. C.

The property is ours; also the mortgage for \$40,000. This must be cleared before a construction loan can be negotiated. Many gifts to the Building Fund are needed—both large and small. District of Columbia regulations require that construction begin twelve months from the time permission for the building is granted by the Board of Zoning Adjustment. This demands an acceleration of ACEI's building schedule and a more rapid gathering of funds. *Together* we can meet this new challenge!

ACEI Memorial Endowment Fund

The name of Bessie Cooper, until her retirement a member of the staff of the Laboratory School of Western Illinois University, has been added to the Roll of Honor at ACEI Headquarters. Miss Cooper's former pupils and parents of children who attended the primary grades at the Laboratory School have made a contribution to the Memorial Endowment Fund of the Association in memory of Miss Cooper, who died eight years ago.

The account of Miss Cooper's life written for the Book of Remembrance says:

"Friends of Miss Cooper (pupils, parents, colleagues, superintendents, legislators) would agree that her first claim to immortality was her abiding concern for the welfare of young children."

Members of the Western Illinois ACEI honored Miss Cooper on her retirement with a banquet and with the establishment of scholarships from the contributions of alumni to help students majoring in kindergarten-primary education. A gift has also come to the ACEI Center Fund in her honor.

ACEI Study Conference Feature

A new feature of the ACEI Conference will be the opportunity to meet some of the authors and illustrators of children's books listed in the ACEI *Bibliography of Books for Children* and exhibited in the ACEI Functional Display. At scheduled times during the Conference week, these authors and illustrators will be in the Functional Display to talk with Conference registrants.

White House Conference on Children and Youth

ACEI and many other organizations have written to the President urging him to convene a conference on children and youth in the year 1960. The President has now selected a committee to organize and carry through the conference. Funds have been budgeted for the employment of a staff to coordinate the planning. With these reassuring developments, it now seems certain that the United States will in 1960, as in previous decades, re-examine the health, education and welfare of its children.

All Children Have Gifts

All Children Have Gifts, ACEI's newest membership bulletin, is now off the press at a time when demands are being made to step up training for a small percent of scientifically gifted children. *All Children Have Gifts*, written by Anne S. Hoppock, State Department of Education, Trenton, New Jersey, puts the focus on finding and developing children's gifts rather than on gifted children. The elementary school curriculum must be broad based. It must make it possible for each child to find and demonstrate his abilities and to be valued for his contributions.

The author does not exclude the able child. "By seeking the undiscovered resources which lie within every child, we best assure the identification of very able children . . . The only sure way to locate the human resources of remarkable talent is to focus study and guidance upon each child."

The less capable children are not neglected either. For every person who discovers and invents, many people with a great variety of skills are needed to convert the inventor's idea into production and use.

Correction

February *News Here and There* carries a description of ways in which the Volusia County ACE and the Sarasota County ACE in Florida were working to establish public school kindergartens. We have been informed that it is the *Daytona Beach ACE* rather than the *Volusia County ACE* which is carrying on this program.

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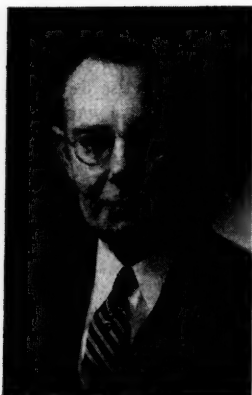
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Bernice Milburn Moore

General Session Speakers

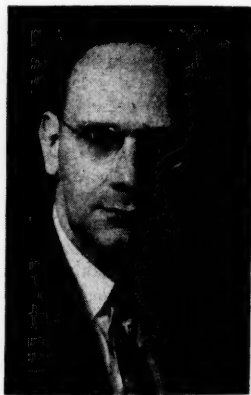
Bernice Milburn Moore is consultant, The Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, The University of Texas, Austin. Special interests: family, personality development and mental health. Has served as Director of Seminars on Counseling in Marriage and the Family for U. S. Air Force and as Coordinator of Texas Cooperative Youth Study.



John H. Fischer

John H. Fischer is superintendent, Baltimore Public Schools, Maryland. Born and educated in Baltimore; served as elementary and junior high school teacher, principal and in other administrative positions. Has wide interests including Baltimore Council of Social Agencies and Boy Scouts of America.

J. Francis Reintjes is associate professor of electrical engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Has been a member of faculty at Manhattan College, New York; served as an engineer with General Electric, engaged in upper atmospheric research; now in charge of educational subjects in radar at M. I. T.



J. Francis Reintjes

Bernard Locker is former executive director for Social Legislation Information Service, Inc., Washington, D. C. Special interest: promotion of citizen interest and action to advance educational, health and welfare opportunities and services for children. Has done social work in New York City.



Bernard Locker

Oliver J. Caldwell is assistant commissioner for international education, Office of Education, Department of HEW. Born and educated in China of missionary parents; has taught in Chinese and American universities and has served in U. S. Department of State.



Oliver J. Caldwell

Books for Children

Editor, ALICE L. ROBINSON

PUNKIN SUMMER. By John Burrell. Illustrations by Roberta Moynihan. New York: Vanguard Press, 424 Madison Ave., 1957.

Pp. 212. \$3. For Punkin Bradley, aged ten, the simple pleasures of a long summer vacation in a small Missouri town included watching the wild geese in the swamp, learning to weave on Gran's loom, longing for a bicycle, beginning to earn money, helping his little sister raise her gosling, Sue Ellen. By the time school started in the fall Punkin had his bicycle and found that arithmetic was not so difficult. It had indeed been "his" summer. Family relationships, spiced with humorous understanding, make this outstanding. To be read to eight and nine year olds, this is for independent reading by those aged ten and up. Glossary of weaving terms included. Ages 8 to 12.

THE 397TH WHITE ELEPHANT. By René Guillot. Translated by Gwen Marsh. Illustrated by Moyra Leatham. New York: Criterion Books, Inc., 257 4th Ave., 1957.

Pp. 93. \$2.75. In a great book in the palace were the names of all the great white elephants who had served in the elephant troop of the family of the Little Prince. When the 396th died and the 397th, Hong-Mo, was found, it was soon apparent that he was most unusual. The Little Prince became well and happy, as did all his subjects. When the 397th had to leave the kingdom unhappiness returned, until at last came the little magic ivory elephant to set all right again. This is a delightful fairy story, fragile and appealing. Ages 8 to 10.

MAGIC BY THE LAKE. By Edward Eager.

Illustrated by N. M. Bodecker. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 383 Madison Ave., 1957. Pp. 183. \$2.95. Instead of "Half Magic," as in the preceding book, the Smith children here have a whole lake full of magic which they cannot control. Adventures with a mermaid, pirates, an admiral at the South Pole, cannibals, Sinbad and Ali Baba result in a well-written fantasy. Black and white illustrations point up the appropriate humor. Ages 8 to 12.

HENRY AND THE PAPER ROUTE. By Beverly Cleary. Illustrated by Louis Darling. New York: William Morrow & Co.,

Inc., 425 4th Ave., 1957. Pp. 192. \$2.75. Almost eleven, Henry decided that a paper route would provide him an important occupation. First, however, he had to convince several people that he was responsible, and then he had to face competition. Kittens proved not to be the tempting premiums for subscriptions he had thought they would be, his advertising boomeranged, and Ramona, well known to readers of other *Henry Huggins* stories, provided further complications. This will be as welcome as have other stories about Henry. Ages 8 to 12.

THE TIDE WON'T WAIT. Told and pictured by Laura Bannon. Chicago: Albert Whitman & Co., 560 W. Lake St., 1957. Unp.

\$2.75. Second-graders can read this interesting family story about Worrell, his brother and his father, and their fishery in Nova Scotia. Dangerous tides in the Bay of Fundy made strict regulations necessary for those who fished there. Visiting Cousin Ann, who did just as she pleased, almost caused a disaster; but brother Ted and previously unappreciated Hippo, Worrell's dog, averted it.

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EDDIE MAKES MUSIC. *Written and illustrated by Carolyn Haywood. New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 425 4th Ave., 1957. Pp. 191. \$2.95.* The starting of a school orchestra made Eddie want to play an instrument. His attempts to secure and to learn to play one were as amusing as his many other activities have been. When he discovered the glockenspiel and experienced the pleasure of making a sound to blend with the other instruments he recognized the beauty of music and decided that making it was "pretty neat." This is as humorous and as heartwarming as are the other *Eddie* books. *Ages 7 to 9.*

PANTALONI. *Written and illustrated by Bettina Ehrlich. New York: Harper & Brothers, 49 E. 33rd St., 1957. \$2.50. Unp.* Although longer than some of this author's earlier books, this text is as brief and the soft-toned illustrations as well integrated with it as in the *Cocolo* stories. Beppolino's small dog, lost, created such havoc that legend

began to depict him as a monster. The little boy's faith in his pet's gentleness was, of course, justified. Both text and pictures show sympathetically the life of poorer people in a small Italian village, their kindness and helpfulness and their love of children. Second graders can read this for themselves. Younger children will like to hear it read aloud and must have an opportunity to pore over the illustrations. *Ages 5 to 8.*

THE OUTSIDE CAT. *By Catherine Woolley (Jane Thayer, pseud.) Illustrated by Feodor Rojankovsky. New York: William Morrow & Co., Inc., 425 4th Ave., 1957. \$2.95. Unp.* Although Samuel, the outside cat, was fed by the family in the house, he still longed to become an inside cat and used every opportunity to enter. It took a change of family in the house to fulfill his wish, and Samuel was ready and waiting at the moment they decided they needed a cat. Near the end of the year, first graders can read this themselves. The unusually clear colored illustrations will appeal to younger children as well. *Ages 4 to 7.*

THE WARMHEARTED POLAR BEAR. *By Robert Murphy. Pictures by Louis Slobod-*

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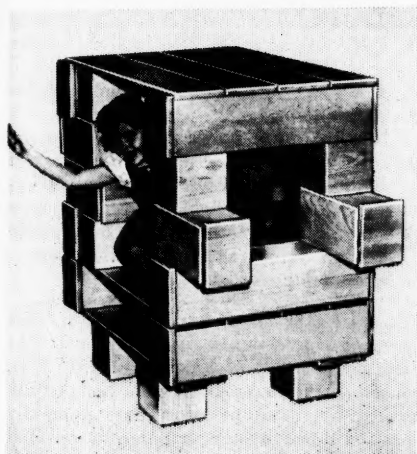
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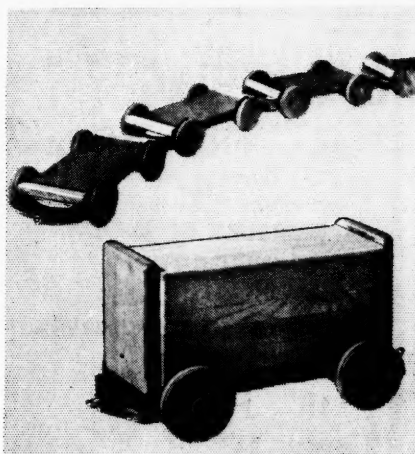


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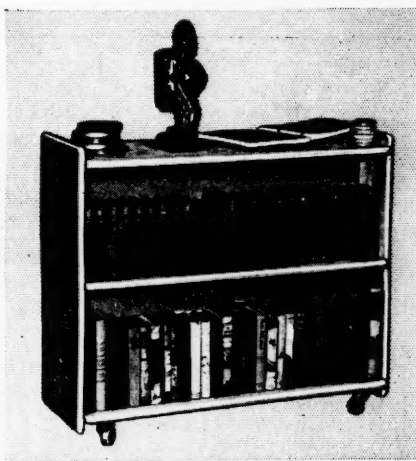
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kin. Boston: Little Brown & Co., 34 Beacon St., 1957. Pp. 47. \$2.95. Spoiled by the crew of the icebound Bonaventure, Whitey, the young polar bear, found the rigors of life in the Arctic too difficult to face alone and so headed south on an iceberg. Pleased by the climate at Miami Beach, he left the ocean and found his favorite sailor playing an accordion in a café. The improbability of this sheer nonsense will delight second- and third-grade readers. Slobodkin draws a delightful Whitey in all his many moods. Ages 6 to 8.

MOUSE HOUSE. By Runner Godden. Illustrated by Adrienne Adams. New York: The Viking Press, 625 Madison Ave., 1957. Pp. 63. \$2.75. In a small house, delightfully furnished, lived two toy mice. Mary hopefully waited for them to play, but they never did. When one of the live mice in the cellar, crowded out of the old flowerpot-home, ventured upstairs and broke and knocked over the furniture in the little mousehouse, Mary took it to the cellar to leave it as junk. Later, hiding in the cellar during a game of hide-and-seek, Mary saw the mouse family living in her mousehouse and knew that it was being well used at last. Girls particularly will love the quiet humor and soft illustrations. Ages 6 to 8.

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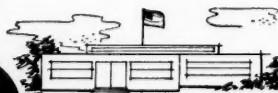
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OVER AND OVER. By Charlotte Zolotow.
Pictures by Garth Williams. New York:
Harper & Brothers, 49 E. 33rd St., 1957.

\$2.75. *Unp.* The unusually lovely pictures, soft yet glowing, show a little girl so young that she only "half-remembers" days and events in the seasons of the year—snowfall, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, vacation at the seashore, Halloween, Thanksgiving and birthday. The unhurried story and the way the little girl's mother prepares her for what comes next will help small listeners share the secure anticipation of the little girl in the story. The last page is especially satisfying, "And of course, over and over, year after year," it happened all over again. *Ages 3 to 6.*

THAT JUD! By Elspeth Bragdon. Illustrated by Georges Schreiber. New York: The Viking Press, 625 Madison Ave., 1957. Pp. 126. \$2.50. Being an orphan in a small Maine fishing village was hard for Jud, because all the townspeople felt it their duty to supervise him. Yet in spite of all the supervision they gave him, he was lonely. Understanding Captain Ben gave him a home, but

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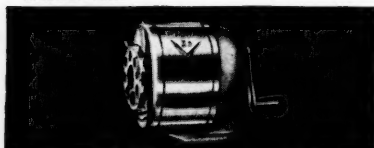
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GETTING TO KNOW SPAIN. By Dee Day.

Illustrated by Donald Lambo. New York:

Coward-McCann, Inc., 210 Madison Ave.,

1957. Pp. 64. \$2.50. This story of present-

day Spain describes the great differences in living which exist throughout the country and explains how cultural and geographical influences have helped bring about and perpetuate these differences. Great contrasts in dress, food, music, houses and speech are observed as the reader visits the fifteen regions of the country and meets the people at their work and play. In spite of these contrasts two strong bonds—family and religion—unite the Spanish people. Included are numerous line drawings, a list of historical events, an index and some suggested sources of information. *Ages 7 to 12.*—Reviewed by RUTH GUE, elementary supervisor, Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland.

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Books for Adults

Editor, ELIZABETH KLEMER

THE TEACHER'S PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT. By William F. Bruce and A. John Holden, Jr. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 383 Madison Ave., 1957. Pp. 346. \$4.25.

This book, designed for college students preparing to enter the profession, views the maturing teacher as one who is becoming professionally and personally more effective and seeks to add impetus to the process of maturing.

After outlining developmental patterns in several areas, the authors attempt to lead the reader into self-understandings which will be accompanied by increased social awareness and more sensitive understanding of others. By examining his own unique experiences related to individuals and social forces present during his elementary and adolescent years and by answering the interspersed questions which require appraisal of the effects

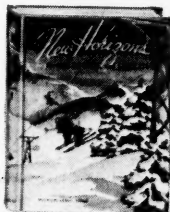
of these experiences in the shaping of his own adult personality, the teacher-reader is expected to gain insights whereby he as "A teacher can then build a constructive program of self-development and of elementary education largely upon a deepened awareness, a broad understanding, of the significance of childhood experience."

The dichotomy of purpose stated in the subtitle, "An Introduction to Self-Awareness and Interpersonal Relations," is reflected in the continual shifting between the first person and the third person orientation; and the use of two different types of print is an attempt to make these transitions less distracting.

The annotated lists of related instructional films are excellent and warrant special mention.—Reviewed by HELEN PROUTY, associate professor of education, San Diego State College, California.

THE CHILD WITHIN THE GROUP. By Marion E. Turner. Stanford, California:

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Stanford University Press, 1957. Pp. 93. \$3. Any teacher concerned about developing a democratic atmosphere in his classroom will find this book interesting. The author organized, directed and taught in a private school where the children had an ever-increasing hand in how they were governed. The school, organized in 1920, existed for three years. Because of the school's short existence the report was published not as the complete answer but rather to encourage more writing in this area.

At the beginning of the experiment the group consisted of sixteen boys and girls ranging in age from four to six and one-half years. Thirty-six youngsters were involved all together, but never more than eighteen at any one time. College classes in child growth and development will find valuable the individual reports of nine of the children who remained with her throughout the three-year period. Educators who advocate the policy of having the same teacher for one group of children for several years may discover supporting evidence here.

The book does not include a running account of the children's meetings the first year, because the author was too busy directing the children toward democratic action. This fact may be helpful to teachers who expect children to manage themselves too soon. The report indicates that progress toward self-government is slow and is dependent upon the teacher's questions and suggestions and upon his helping the children to accept their feelings, to deal fairly with one another, and to stick to their rules until the group decides to change them.

The book is written in an easy-to-read style and should interest teachers concerned with the development of democratic action within their groups.—Reviewed by DONALD W. GRISIER, associate professor of education, San Diego State College, California.

YOUNG MINDS NEED SOMETHING TO GROW ON. By Muriel Ward. White Plains, New York: Row, Peterson & Co., 1957. Pp. 192. \$2.40. In this book, the author challenges the teachers of young chil-

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dren—nursery school and kindergarten age—to examine their programs and to see that children are receiving the best in education for their age levels. Special emphasis is put on mental development. The question is asked, "Are the children being challenged to face and solve problems in this area?" Physical readiness is easier to see; it is time for teachers to question and explore mental readiness. There is a great deal of emphasis on helping a child understand the "why" of a situation, so he may become more self-directing. A wide variety of subjects are discussed. A few of the examples are: guiding the children to seek the core of a problem; teaching the cause and consequence of behavior; developing effective thinking and good judgment. The teacher needs to interpret and clarify facts by planning a rich environment. It would seem that some of the experiences related in the latter part of the book might better be left for later school experiences. However, the author does stress child development principles of differences in individual children and in groups of children. Rather than emphasizing a formula, a challenge is being raised. Each child should have the greatest possible opportunity to develop the capabilities he possesses. This requires resourceful, imaginative teachers of nursery school and kindergarten who are willing to experiment and cooperate in this mutual task of continuous learning for young children.—Reviewed by BERYL CAMPBELL, associate professor of education, San Diego State College, Calif.

METHODS AND MATERIALS IN ELEMENTARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

New Edition. By Edwina Jones, Edna Morgan and Gladys Stevens. Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1957.

Pp. 432. \$4.25. This book offers a complete program in physical education for grades one to six with practical detailed help for the classroom teacher. It discusses the philosophy and objectives of physical education. A chapter on guidance of children through physical education emphasizes the needs of the child in his growth and development and the contributions which can be made by the physical education activity program toward meeting these needs.

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To help make prospective teachers aware of the basic concepts and ways of appropriate behavior in a democratic society, and to help them understand the process by which children maintain continuity in their social learning, are the goals of this new text. It suggests useful techniques for the prospective teacher.

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Discussing procedures for identifying and instructing the bright and gifted child, this new and long awaited text is written for the elementary and secondary school teachers. Valuable for both the professional and student teachers, it offers sound suggestions for the enrichment of the curriculum. Important Features: Every aspect of teaching gifted children is presented concisely in down-to-earth terms. Helpful appendices supply information on bibliography, tests, methods and topics for research.

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rhythmic activities grouped according to age level. Help in the planning and administration of the physical education program includes suggested framework for units covering a variety of activities over periods of time from one week to one year.

A chapter describing games of many nations discusses the use of games as a means of fostering understanding and good will. The consideration of game characteristics in various geographical areas and of games with universal patterns is an interesting feature of this chapter.—Reviewed by MARION L. SCHWOB, *associate professor of physical education, San Diego State College, California.*

ENRICHING FAMILY LIFE. By Bess B. Lane. Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 419 New Jersey Ave., S. E., 1957.

Pp. 121. \$3.25. Conscientious parents generally make it their responsibility to obtain reading materials which outline their duties and offer solutions to their many and varied

problems. Often, however, they despair of the fact that much searching through a maze of content is involved before they can locate the information desired.

Bess Lane has prepared a volume which is designed to satisfy the needs of busy parents who wish to find concise answers with a minimum of searching. Within the content of her text, parents can explore many facets of home life and consider in detail the impact of numerous community influences upon the home. Patterns of family living are reviewed in the light of basic values; physical and emotional aspects of child growth and development are stressed as they relate to activities in the home and school. Adequate relationships involved in family and community living are stressed by this author in a manner which will satisfy the busy and harried parents who find it necessary to reflect on numerous problems in a concise and professional manner.—Reviewed by EVANS L. ANDERSON, *assistant professor of education, San Diego State College, California.*



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THE FAMILY BOOK OF CHILD CARE. By Niles Newton. New York: Harper & Brothers, 49 E. 33rd St., 1957. Pp. 477. \$4.95. The author has contributed an excellent work to an ever-growing fund of knowledge concerning child growth and development. This volume will prove to be especially helpful to parents who desire basic and readable information relative to pregnancy, childbirth and child rearing. The positive approach which this author emphasizes throughout the text will be of great value to adults who are concerned about the responsibilities of the home particularly in relation to health and discipline. Dr. Newton elaborates effectively concerning the identification and suggested remedies for a variety of problems related to physical health and emotional adjustment. A list of organizations helpful to parents who want specialized information is supplied. As conscientious adults become more keenly aware of their obligations with respect to the effective rearing of their children, they will frequently consult outstanding works such as this for reassurance and guidance.—Reviewed by EVANS L. ANDERSON.

Bulletins and Pamphlets

Editor, HELEN COWAN WOOD

The following were reviewed by Afton Dill Nance, consultant in elementary education, California State Department of Education, Sacramento.

THE HOW AND WHY OF DISCIPLINE.

By Aline B. Auerbach. New York: The Child Study Association of America, Inc., 1957. "This booklet is about discipline in the sense of something you do *for* or *with* a child, not *to* him." This sentence from the opening paragraph of *The How and Why of Discipline* indicates the wealth of sound psychology and good common sense which are the basic ingredients of this publication. The approach is lighthearted, the style concise and readable. The value of the bulletin is enhanced by the attractive format and the lively illustrations by Doug Anderson.

Teachers, parents and those expecting to be teachers and parents will enjoy and profit from reading this bulletin; but the children

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whose discipline is guided by the sound counsel given on these pages will profit most of all.

THE UNIT IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTION. *Bureau of Curriculum Research. New York: Board of the City of New York, 1956.* Teaching units and resource units are defined, and ways in which they may be used in classrooms are described. Helpful material on teacher-pupil planning, committee work and classroom research is included. Ways in which unit teaching may be carried on at both elementary and secondary school levels are analyzed. The addition of descriptions of actual classroom situations might have enlivened the material and clarified meanings. The listings of resource materials are extensive and will be helpful to teachers.

THE STATUS OF THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER. *National Education Association. Washington, D. C.: Research Division, NEA. Vol. XXXV, No. 1, February 1957.* This research bulletin was prepared to provide basic information for the 1957 NEA Conference whose theme was *An Educated People Moves Freedom Forward*. The bulletin contains a wealth of material useful to persons who have responsibilities in interpreting the teaching profession to the public.

Much of the information is presented in chart form. Of special interest is the chart which shows the raising level of professional preparation. In 1930-31 about 1% of teachers held master's or higher degrees. In 1955-56 approximately 43% had reached this level of preparation. However, other figures indicate

that one teacher in ten fails to meet present certification requirements, and the greatest number of these persons are elementary teachers in rural areas.

Love of teaching and the rewarding sense of achievement which comes from work with children and young people were clearly indicated as important factors in keeping teachers in our schools. A study of this publication is recommended.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS ON ALASKA. *By Ellen Martin Brinsmade. Fairbanks, Alaska: Adler's Bookshop, 1956.* This is an annotated list of a wide variety of books on the geography, history and cultural life of Alaska. The author has lived and studied in Alaska and has a strong feeling that the life of that country should be depicted with sympathy and accuracy.

The book will be useful to teachers and to persons concerned with curriculum making. A subject classification and index are included.

SOME TRAUMATIC EFFECTS OF SEPARATION AND PLACEMENT. *By Ner Littner, M.D., New York: Child Welfare League of America, 1956.* This bulletin emphasizes ways in which foster parents and teachers can help children come to terms with the problems inherent in leaving an old environment and entering a new one. One of the important factors is recognition that the situation is traumatic and potentially destructive of personality even when the placement is entirely favorable and the old situation clearly undesirable or impossible.

This is a troubling study as one realizes the numbers of children who have to face separation and placement not once but pos-

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sibly several times before they reach maturity. This publication builds insight into the problems and gives constructive guidance to help with crucial situations as they arise:

THE FLEXIBLE SCHOOL. A GUIDE TO SCHOOL PLANNING. *New York State Association of Elementary School Principals (revised by Department of Elementary School Principals, NEA). Washington, D. C.: Department of Elementary School Principals, NEA, 1957.* This is not a treatise on how to plan a school building, as the title might suggest. The publication does give sound direction to a more complex task—how to build a school. The authors and collaborators believe that flexibility is an important aspect of a school which can successfully perform its function in a rapidly changing technological society. The key to the underlying message is this statement, "There will always be more to know than is now known concerning this or any other subject."

The publication not only states once more that change is inevitable and here to stay and that persons must learn to live in a changing world, but that a mature person must take

responsibility for the direction and control of change toward a greater fulfillment of democratic purposes.

This bulletin is well worth reading. The sections on evaluation are especially helpful.

TODAY'S CHILDREN ARE TOMORROW'S WORLD, PROBLEMS OF DEPTH AND SCOPE IN EDUCATION. *By Lawrence S. Kubie and Others. New York: Bank Street College of Education, 1957.* This volume presents the main speeches given at the Fifth Annual Conference sponsored by the Associates of the Bank Street College of Education. The papers are concerned with children as personalities—as developing human beings. The relation of education to the process of maturing, the influence of the culture on personality development, and the problems of values in our society are among the topics discussed with probity and distinction.

This is a thought-provoking publication, and such thinking as is recorded in these pages could have profound and constructive influence upon the advancement of educational thought and action. Highly recommended!

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Over the Editor's Desk

Dear Readers:

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
'to talk of many things'."

This time it is a word of recognition and appreciation for the artists—newly discovered and "old"—who have illustrated for CHILDHOOD EDUCATION this past year. Virginia Toedtmann, once a teacher and now a housewife in Berger, Missouri, caught the gaiety of children playing London Bridge in her linoleum block print used as the September 1957 frontispiece.

In the December issue the frontispiece was supplied by Wilma Klimke, a primary grade teacher of Montello, Wisconsin. The line drawing of the Mexican piñata game was in keeping with a policy begun last year—featuring children's Christmas customs from various countries. The research was done by Lois Belfield Watt, a member of the Board of Editors. Photos of pictures of children playing the piñata game were taken at the Pan American Union, Washington, D. C., since the books could not be checked out. Other booklets containing pictures were sent to the artist. The result of the research you see in the December issue.

Then January 1958 needed "a bouquet for our authors." A thank-you goes to Michi Soma Freeman, secretary of the Editorial Department, for creating a line drawing of an Oriental arrangement of chrysanthemums.

Jannette Spitzer, a Syracuse, New York, parent, has the faculty of making clever line drawings suitable for any season or occasion. In the January CHILDHOOD EDUCATION you will see such line drawings.

Don Blanding's poem, *How Big Is a Heart?*, on February's frontispiece, is an example of amalgamation of ideas, research, interest, effort and artistic talent.

The poem was first enjoyed in a speech given to a school supervisors' audience by a World War II entertainer who visited the outposts in the Pacific. Enroute home from the Conference Lovelle Downing, a curriculum coordinator from Modesto, California, my travel-mate, expressed a wish to have a copy of the poem. It stood out in her memory (and mine, too) of the Conference. Knowing my interest in the poem, Lovelle sent me a copy of it with the additional information that it was written by Don Blanding.

After becoming a member of the ACEI staff in Washington, D. C., and working with publications, the idea of using the poem, *How Big Is a Heart*, kept creeping into my thinking. The February month gave the clue. Why not use it as a frontispiece for CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, framing the verse with a heart and with illustrations of the poem's thoughts in the background? Florine Harding, ACEI fellow, did further research at the Library of Congress and substantiated what I had learned from a neighborhood library: it was a poem from Don Blanding's collection, *Mostly California*. Now permission to use it was necessary and this was obtained from Dodd, Mead and Company, New York. Helen Heffernan, chief, elementary education, California State Department of Education, discovered just the artist who could carry out the plans; namely, Sonia Riha, Los Angeles. Take a second look at the February CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, and we know you'll agree the frontispiece has an interesting illustration.

Yes, friends of our journal have contributed their art expressions for your enjoyment. We are grateful.

Sincerely,



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